

LET'S DO IT RIGHT

## The Courthouse

Two encouraging bits of recent news are Macon County's increase, during the past year, in taxable wealth and the announcement of plans for a public meeting to discuss the possibility of either building a new courthouse or remodeling the present one.

The gain of \$206,000 in the value of taxable property is not spectacular; it represents an increase of only about 1 per cent. But it is a healthy sign.

Interestingly, tax evaluation and the courthouse problem are closely tied together. For a new courthouse can hardly be built without a bond issue, and state law limits the amount of bonds a county may issue; the bonds may not exceed a certain proportion of the taxable wealth. Our present tax evaluation probably would not permit a bond issue big enough to build a modern courthouse.

But if we should re-evaluate our property for tax purposes, on a scientific basis, and list it at what it is worth, or even at 80 or 90 per cent of what it is worth, our taxable wealth probably would be nearer \$36,000,000 than the present \$18,000,000. That way, it would be legally possible to issue bonds to build a courthouse and for other needed improvements.

The chances are we can't, legally, issue enough bonds to build a new courthouse until there is a thoroughgoing re-evaluation. If that proves true, here's hoping any remodeling will be really that, not mere makeshift repairs; a remodeling carefully planned to fit future, as well as present-day, needs. If it turns out we can't build a new courthouse now, let's fix the present one so it'll be both usable AND presentable.

## We'd Abolish It!

We see by the papers there's a movement to add some laymen to the State Textbook Commission, now made up entirely of professional educators.

That's probably a step in the right direction, but it doesn't go far enough. We'd abolish the commission.

We'd abolish it, that is, as the agency with the final say about what textbooks are to be used in the schools of the state. As a purely advisory body, to recommend, and nothing more, some good texts, it might serve a useful purpose.

That suggestion is based not on the fact that, from time to time, the commission has made some terribly poor choices of texts—and it has; it is based on the conviction that the whole theory of setting up a single bureaucratic agency to make the final choices of the books to be used in North Carolina's schools is wrong in principle as well as in practice. We talk about "academic freedom"—and then rob every public school teacher in the state of that freedom. The people to choose the texts they're going to use should be the teachers who're going to use them; for the text that would appeal to one teacher would be dry as dust to another. At the least, the choice should be left to the county unit, or, better still, to the school.

It is true, of course, as some readers are already thinking, that we can save money by adopting a single sixth grade English text, for example, and buying it wholesale. But if saving money is the main consideration, then it'd make sense to do away with texts entirely. An even cheaper way to run the schools would be not to have any!

## Culverts And People

"You and I are the government", we are told; "we control government through our votes. So it's quite all right to concentrate power in Raleigh and Washington."

We have here in Franklin right now a good illustration of how wrong that is: That culvert job at the foot of East Town Hill.

That relatively small job has been under way for a month or more; so far as the layman can see, virtually no progress has been made. Meanwhile, traffic moves over what must be one of the worst detours in North Carolina, and no provision whatever is made for a walkway for pedestrians.

If that job were being done by the town or county, local officials would have heard plenty from the citizens. But it is being done by the state, and

"the state" is off yonder somewhere, in Sylva, or Asheville, or Raleigh. The average citizen doesn't know where or to whom to protest; so he suffers in silence — and mad.

And it is being freely predicted he will continue to suffer all summer, with the far-off "state" apparently indifferent to his plight.

## Charles O. Ramsey

Charles O. Ramsey really was two distinct persons.

In his office, he was Town Clerk Ramsey, operating almost like a machine—and a remarkably efficient machine, at that. In that role, he devoted all his physical energy, all his penetrating mind, to town affairs. He was determined the Franklin municipal government should get every penny it was due in taxes — and he had a tax collection record probably unequalled anywhere in North Carolina; determined, too, that it should get a full dollar's worth of goods or services for every dollar's expenditure. Beyond that, there probably was no public official anywhere of whom it could be more truly said that everybody, dealing with him in his official capacity, "had to eat out of the same spoon". Thoroughly familiar with town business, he came as nearly being a town manager as any man, lacking the authority of a manager and confined to an office, could have been. And his devotion to the town's interests led him, unhesitatingly, to make suggestions to his employers, the mayor and aldermen — suggestions usually good, and frequently accepted.

Still recuperating from a recent illness, he had dropped by the town office when death came. And so he died where undoubtedly he would have wished, in the spot where he had labored faithfully and well in behalf of the community he loved.

Outside his office, he was Charles O. Ramsey, human being. Separated from the responsibilities of his official position, he was genial, thoughtful and considerate, and loyal to the nth degree—a warm personality, pleasantly spiced by a keen sense of humor.

It was that person who, though he long had lived in town, kept his membership in, and gave his active support to, the Iota Baptist Church, the site for which had been donated by his father. It was that person who beamed happily as he presided, a few years ago, at the big birthday party for his mother he had arranged. It was that person who could not see a child without smiling. And it was that side of his nature that was responsible for the way he was addressed. He was rarely "Mr. Ramsey" and almost never "Charles"; instead, he was known as "Charlie" or "Uncle Charlie" or "Mr. Charlie", designations that conveyed the feeling of affection so many felt for him.

## A Good Balance

An analysis of the tax evaluation figures, by townships, published in last week's Press, reveals some interesting facts.

Of the county's total taxable wealth, approximately one-fourth lies in Nantahala township. This is chiefly accounted for by the properties of the Nantahala Power and Light Company.

Thirty-six per cent, or a little more than a third, is in Franklin township, and Highlands township accounts for another 16 per cent. Fifty-two per cent of the county's wealth thus lies in those two townships. That suggests about half of our taxable wealth is urban.

The remaining 22 per cent is in the other eight townships, all rural. It's a safe bet, therefore, that

that proportion of our wealth is chiefly agricultural.

The proportion, as a matter of fact, must be somewhat higher than that, because part of Highlands township's wealth and much of Franklin township's lies outside the towns proper. At least one-fourth of our wealth, therefore, must be agricultural.

That, we'd guess, is a good balance, a balance worth maintaining.

## Helping Us Out

(Windsor, Colo., Beacon)

High schools all over the U. S. are now mailing in their requests for federal aid in teaching math and science. And while many an honorable school board director does not relish putting himself in the position of a buzzard fighting for a morsel of the huge carcass of the federal income tax levy, still he's representing the local taxpayers and as long as the vulture system is in operation in our economy, it's his job to grab as much as he can—let the school boards in other towns suffer if they aren't as alert as we are.

Our ag programs are now under federal aid. Will we eventually have to build a separate science building? And what will be next on the list—foreign languages? English?

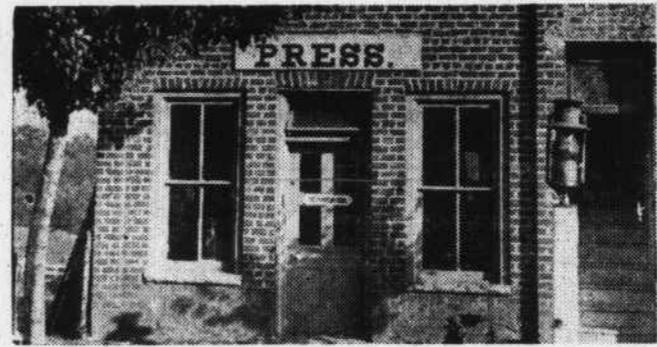
Many, many Americans must be of the right age to have learned a big lesson the past few years: when a politician in Washington says, "Let's help the people—they need it," let's all remember what he's Really saying:

"They have troubles, and we're big enough to force them to act. So we'll collect \$1.80 from each taxpayer for this problem, of which 80 cents will solve the problem and the dollar will set up a new bureau to handle collection and distribution of funds."

The voters asked for a change last November but they didn't get it. They'll ask for another next year, unless our lawmakers learn to boast to their constituents, not about the special interests they have assisted with federal aid, but rather, all the lobbyists and pressure groups they have voted AGAINST.

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

Looking Backward Through the Files of The Press



### 65 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK (1894)

Dr. Fred Siler is trying to tame a bicycle. Wanted: Two or three large rattlesnake skins. Inquire at Press office.

The oak grove around the Methodist Church has been given a decent trimming.

A half dozen of our town boys spent two or three days of last week on Nantahala and caught over 600 nice trout.

### 35 YEARS AGO (1924)

Hard fought campaigns for the Democratic nomination for sheriff and register of deeds came to a close Saturday, when C. L. Ingham won the nomination for sheriff over Robt. A. Patton, and Horace J. Hurst was nominated for register of deeds, over Steve Porter.

A mass meeting, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, was held at the courthouse the evening of June 5. Mrs. E. C. Kingsbery, League chairman, presided.

### 15 YEARS AGO (1944)

The board of education has announced the election of O. F. Summer as principal of the Highlands school, and W. C. Newton as assistant principal.

Miss Imogene Landrum, student at Woman's College, Greensboro, has joined the office staff of The Franklin Press for the summer.

### 5 YEARS AGO (1954)

T. H. (Tom) Fagg, assistant county agent here since 1939, will take over as county agent July 1, succeeding the late S. W. Mendenhall.

Dedication of the new Bethel Methodist Church—which has a history dating back to pre-Civil War days—is planned Sunday.

## A CHOICE OF FLAVORS

### Teen-ager Tells How She Gradually Came To Appreciate American Freedom

Reprinted from Mount Dora, Fla., Topic

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the prize-winning entry of Miss Carol Schey, high school senior, in a contest in the Mount Dora, Fla., high school.)

How do the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights affect me as an individual?

My first indication of anything governmental or patriotic was World War II. The main topic of conversation was ... because of the war this ... because of the war that ... the war ... Because I was quite small at that time, the war usually seemed vague and unreal. The harrowing exceptions were the dreadful news broadcasts. They frightened me, and as an escape, I would clap my hands over my ears and sing loudly (off-key) to drown out the commentator. This tantrum was always short-lived because curiosity was, even then, my dominant trait.

Such news reports prompted me, a very little girl, to ask some very big, basic questions:

"Why is there a war?" After studied adult deliberation came the answer, "To protect our rights."

"What are rights?" The answer to this was, in terms that I could understand, "It is your right to choose what flavor of ice cream you want, visit your grandparents when you can, or go to church on Sunday morning. Some little kids can't do that."

"Why not?" The obvious adult answer was, "Because they aren't protected by a Constitution and Bill of Rights." Such a patriotic reply, however, was not enough to satisfy the analytical mind of a small child.

"What's a consti-tu-tion?" Now reducing such a herculean article to small-try jargon couldn't be easy, but the approximate attempt was, "Well, it's a big piece of paper saying what's right, what's wrong, what people can or can't do, and what the government is supposed to do. Now stop asking questions!"

It is a good thing I did stop because my next question would have been, "Why don't other countries have one, too?" How could one possibly explain starvation, the Gestapo, or the Kemptel to a happy, well-fed four-year-old? This was my first encounter with our Constitution and the Bill

of Rights. Our next notable collision wasn't until I entered school where, beginning with the basic Pledge of Allegiance, I was indoctrinated with "amor patriae" and nationality. Because it was the prosperous post-war period, I, like most everyone else, became complacent.

In a few short years, unfortunately, I was somewhat disillusioned by the Korean "conflict." Again were the ominous news broadcasts. This time, as a counterpoise, my mother warned that sometime in the future I might be directly involved in war. It is the element of personal danger that removes indifference or trepidation and promotes true patriotism. Consequently, I listened avidly to the news and determined to educate myself about the world around me.

Abruptly I was immensely interested in our governmental structure. I devoured the newspapers, magazines, and never missed a news broadcast. My history and geography textbooks became sagas of adventure. Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence and hi-pointed the Constitution, emerged as a hero.

I learned how the rights I had taken for granted are permanently proclaimed in the Bill of Rights. The deplorable predicaments of countries, not so well protected, disturbed me.

About this period of my life, the country was immersed in a Presidential campaign. Everywhere I heard small debates and personal discussions, most of them heated. This was my first experience with a political campaign, and the obvious rent in the government's pants disconcerted me. The party conventions, those epitomes of democracy, fascinated me. Here was a nutshell example of the freedoms of speech, assembly, and suffrage I had discovered in the Bill of Rights. On election night, I was glued to the radio, anxiously absorbing the returns. Although I was forced to bed around 12 o'clock, my first question in the morning was, "Who won?" After the hustle-bustle was all over, the swift return to normalcy amazed me. Hardly any of the losers remained aggravated.

As the years have passed, and I have come in contact with personal enemies, and, occasionally, unprincipled characters, it is easier for me to realize the basis

STRICTLY

## PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES



Wonder what it is that makes most of us so all-fired ornery.

I say "most of us", because I assume that people are pretty much alike; and I know one man who's ornery beyond reason — the fellow who's typing these words.

And strange to say, I'm orneriest of all with the folks I think most of. All my life, for instance, if some member of my family suggested I do thus-and-so — even though I knew the suggestion was prompted solely by interest in my welfare — something inside always made me want to do the opposite. (Fortunately for me, I didn't always surrender to that impulse; but I nearly always wanted to!)

What is it that makes me, when I'm headed for a parking place on the south side of Main Street, with my hand held out, signalling to turn left, and somebody already in the left lane cuts in ahead of me — what is it, when that happens, that makes me so boiling mad? Why, I answer my own question, the fact the other fellow is a parking place hog. But could it be that I'm something of a hog, myself, or I wouldn't boll?

What is it that makes me hate so to be proved wrong? You'd think I'd want to be sure I'm right, and that I'd recognize the only way to be sure is to listen to evidence that my present opinion is wrong, and if that is the case, be glad to be shown. But am I? Though the evidence proves to everybody, including me, that I'm 100 per cent wrong, I get hot and bothered, and am inclined to argue about it.

What is it that gets me upset when a public speaker reads his speech? Heck! that's his way; he'd probably be annoyed by something I did, if it were I making the speech. Besides, if I'd just listen, I'd probably learn something. But nine times out of ten, I keep

wondering: "Why wasn't that fellow interested enough in the impression he makes on me to have prepared that speech so he wouldn't have to read it, word for word?"

What is it that makes me get so outdone with people because they don't do things the right way — my way, that is? Goodness knows, I insisted on learning — and still do — by making my own mistakes. But instead of being patient while the other fellow learns the same way, I want to shout at him: "Why don't you do it right the first time?"

What is it that makes me look down my nose at the man — or, more often, the woman — who tries to snub me? My mind tells me the way to treat people like that is to ignore them. But unless I watch myself, I get down on their level, and snub right back.

And what is it that makes me like to see somebody who's pompous given a shock? I know, of course, that shocking people just to see them shocked, is a characteristic of the adolescent, and I really am old enough to be out of adolescence; so I carefully try to avoid doing it. But I wonder sometimes if I'm so darned mature, after all, because I surely get a kick out of it when somebody else does it.

Honest confession, it is said, is good for the soul. Well, mine ought to be in fine shape, after those confessions of just how ornery I can be.

That's a good place to stop. But before I do, I want to make one thing completely clear: I was asking those questions of myself, not of you.

If your soul needs improving, ask your own questions. I've got worries enough of my own, just trying to live with one ornery human being that I never can quite get away from.

ARE WE GUILTY?

## Destruction By Rejection

Industrial News Review

The destruction of the aging person by rejection must—and can—be stopped through individual community action.

That stand has been taken by Aubrey D. Gates, director of the American Medical Association's Division of Field Services. In his words: "We are permitting a new form of euthanasia—the destruction of the elderly—to stealthily fasten itself in practice in our society." And by this rejection, he

adds "... we destroy them as surely as if they, like the unwanted infants of long ago, were tossed over a cliff."

This is purely a community matter, to be handled by community action. The first step, it is Mr. Gates' view, is to inventory community assets in the form of its elder citizens. How many are there? What are their problems, if any? Are their valuable life experiences being utilized? Can their knowledge and skills be put to good use?

Once such questions as these are answered, the community can move to meet the needs. Adequate nursing homes, rehabilitation programs, and recreational activities for the elderly are examples of the requirements. If the necessary facilities don't exist, they can be built. Then the aged can remain in the community; they will not have to be sent far away from loved ones and friends; they will not die from loneliness and isolation.

Medical progress is steadily lengthening the life span. But that will be in vain if we reject the aged and allow precious human values to be tragically and needlessly destroyed.

## CRAMMING — THEN AND NOW

We look with wonder upon the latest fad to capture the imaginations of college men.

The fad is a sort of game, in which students attempt to earn for their colleges the championship of the English-speaking world by getting the most men into a single telephone booth at one time.

The only limitation, not counting the structure of the booth, is that one of the participants must be able to answer the phone, if it should ring.

Whether a conversation under such circumstances would do credit to college men we can't say.

Way back when we were in college, cramming was not an unknown art. But the idea then was to cram a little something into ourselves, instead of vice versa. — Denver Post.

## HE'S VERY ONE WE NEED HERE!

Down at Cape Canaveral, where the missiles are launched, live a whole group of scientists, psychologists and doctors who spend their time trying to find the right man whom they will launch toward the moon when the time comes. They have filed thousands of index cards describing top physical specimens and administer Rorschach tests to hundreds of volunteers. Machines constantly process these findings.

The list of available candidates is now down to fifty, and eventually this concerted hunt will row down to one man, physically sound, psychologically right, a smart, truly, he will be a man sana in corpore sano.

But there is something about the purpose of this test. Having found the perfect man seems the last place they should send him to the moon. Rather, they ought to keep him here, help propagate the race. They ought to shoot off the least qualified man, because we need the best man like we never need him before.—Harry Golden, Carolina Israelite.

## NO IMPROVEMENT IS FORESEEN

By 1975, supermarkets will be huge, circular-dome food areas and shoppers will get around cartmobsiles. So predicts a engineer, who also says that mobiles will have radar bump. Obviously the engineer foresees no improvement in women drivers. — Food Engineering.